

giving matters

SUMMER 2006

A publication for supporters of
health-related research and education
at the University of Minnesota



PHOTO: TIM RUMMELHOFF

“I come from the U,” says Amplatz.
“I’ve been there for 45 years.
All of my accomplishments
are a result of the U.”

Minnesota miracle-maker

Kurt Amplatz’s medical inventions are saving lives.
Now he’s giving back to the university that gave him his start.

It’s difficult to find AGA Medical Corporation’s Golden Valley office. Located on a frontage road off Highway 169 and tucked behind a sprawling business complex, it seems possible the company prefers to remain anonymous. But inside is something well worth discovering.

Just inside past the receptionist’s desk, you’ll find a wall of small, official-looking plaques — 13 in all. On closer inspection, it’s clear that each one commemorates a patent for a unique, often life-saving medical device or procedure. And each one originated in the mind of Kurt Amplatz, M.D., 82, a revolutionary inventor and pioneer in interventional radiology and pediatric cardiology. In short, one of Minnesota’s medical miracle-makers.

Amplatz formed AGA Medical in 1995 with his own start-up money and two partners. Today it’s bringing in more than \$100 million a year in revenue, does business in more than 90 countries, employs nearly 200, and is growing so fast that it’s outgrown its current space. In fact, employees are already preparing to move to a much larger space in Plymouth later this year.

None of this appears to be important to Amplatz, however. But ask him about the

devices he’s created to treat everything from kidney stones to heart defects to migraines, and he comes alive. “What I’m most interested in,” he explains, “is helping people, coming up with new inventions, and puttering around in my workshop.”

Amplatz was born in Austria and retains a bit of his native accent today. After earning his medical degree in Innsbruck in 1951, he came to the United States for an internship in Brooklyn, New York, and a residency in Detroit. In 1957 he made his way to the University of Minnesota, lured by doctors who were doing innovative work in open-heart surgery.

He spent the next four decades on the Minneapolis campus inventing medical tools and procedures ranging from a rudimentary machine to inject dye into children’s hearts to reveal defects to a technique to remove kidney stones through a patient’s back. Many of them have since been replaced with newer

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giving matters





On most college campuses, summer is a time to regroup, reflect, and plan for the coming school year. Here

at the Minnesota Medical Foundation, we're running at top speed.

This spring our board of trustees finalized a statement of strategic goals for fiscal years 2007 through 2011. Our lead goal is to increase, by 2011, our level of sustained philanthropy from \$60 million to \$100 million annually while maintaining our cost to raise a dollar at 10 to 20 cents. An additional goal is to increase the percentage of dollars raised for capital and current uses while maintaining the purchasing power of the endowment at or above its current level.

These goals were developed after careful research and analysis by the planning committee of our board of trustees. They are designed to support the University of Minnesota as it strives over the next decade to become one of the top three public research universities in the world. They also reflect the need for philanthropy to play a larger role in financing public education as government support becomes less certain.

We are excited by the strategic focus these goals provide and have used them as a framework for developing budgets and work plans for the coming fiscal year.

Meanwhile, there's another exciting development: Our board of trustees search committee — led by vice chair John Murphy — is close to finalizing its decision on our next president and CEO. From an original pool of 400, the committee identified 6 candidates for in-depth interviews. They hope to name the final candidate in early July, the beginning of our fiscal year. Rest assured that we'll share that news as soon as possible.

Carl J. Bendorf

Vice President of Development
Interim President and CEO
Minnesota Medical Foundation

A gift of gratitude — and hope

A friend's encounter with lymphoma motivated a donor to give to cancer research

When Anita McCullough's dear friend Jane Ehm was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, McCullough desperately wanted to do something to help her and other patients with lymphoma.

"Janie was very seriously ill, and I felt that the only hope was in research," says McCullough, who lives in Palm Desert, California. "She is like a daughter and a best friend to me. Her mother and I were college roommates and best friends, and I have known Janie since she was a little girl."

McCullough decided to get in touch with Ehm's physician, Linda Burns, M.D., who is fellowship director for the Medical School's Division of Hematology, Oncology, and Transplantation. Soon McCullough was inspired to donate more than \$500,000 in support of Burns's research at the University, which focuses on developing experimental therapies for malignant hematologic disorders, including stem cell transplantation and immunotherapy.

The generous size of McCullough's gift has enabled Burns and her fellow researchers to conduct clinical trials to test some new drugs, called monochromal antibodies, that specifically target lymphoma. These antibodies were developed at the University of Minnesota Cancer Center.



Linda Burns, M.D.

The gift provided critical support at a time when it was most needed. "We would not have been able to do these drug studies without Mrs. McCullough's support," explains Burns, "because they are very expensive and very time-consuming."

In October 2000 Burns performed Ehm's stem cell transplant, for which Ehm's sister was the donor. Ehm is grateful for the treatment she received at the University — and even more grateful that she has remained in remission since the transplant.



After Jane Ehm (left) received a stem cell transplant that put her lymphoma into remission, Anita McCullough (right) decided to financially support research conducted by Ehm's doctor, Linda Burns, M.D.

"If I hadn't had the stem cell transplant I don't think I'd be alive today," says Ehm. "I wouldn't have seen my daughter get married or have met my new baby granddaughter."

Ehm's recovery has also made it possible for her to visit McCullough in California, continuing a tradition that began when she was 17 and spent the summer living in San Francisco with the woman she calls "Neets."

"My mom isn't living anymore, and Neets is like a second mother to me," says Ehm, 57, now a retired kindergarten teacher living in La Crescent, Minnesota. "When she called to tell me she was making a donation in my name, I was both surprised and very touched."

"Mrs. McCullough's gift came as quite a surprise, and the amount was certainly very generous," says Burns. "This gift has made a dramatic difference to our research mission. She recognized the need for research, which is the only way we can bring new therapies to patients, to hopefully cure them."

Twin Cities Hope Lodge

With your support, adult cancer patients will have a place of comfort and healing

Imagine you've been diagnosed with cancer. You live in a small Minnesota town, and your doctor tells you that the best place to receive cancer treatment is at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis — hours away from home. In addition, your treatment will take weeks. How will you manage the trip? And how will you pay for an extended visit?

Unfortunately, many adults facing cancer find themselves in this situation. Each year, hundreds of patients and their families travel great distances to receive cancer care in the Twin Cities.

"The number of cancer patients receiving outpatient treatment is now nearly 80 percent of all cancer treatments performed," says Seymour Levitt, M.D., a radiation oncologist with the University and honorary chair of the Hope Lodge project. "And, while cancer treatment has improved, the number of patients who require treatment over an extended period of time is increasing," he explains. These out-of town guests often stay for weeks. The physical and emotional toll during these times is tremendous, and worries about lodging costs and transportation only add to the burden.

That's why the Cancer Center is joining the American Cancer Society and the University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview, in an effort to build a Hope Lodge near the University's medical campus.

The Twin Cities Hope Lodge will provide a home away from home for up to 40 adult cancer patients and their caregivers each night — all just a few blocks from the University of Minnesota's renowned cancer treatment clinics and close to all major Twin Cities freeways.

But the facility is designed to be more than a hotel. It will be more like a residence, where guests can build camaraderie with other cancer patients and focus on getting well.

The Hope Lodge will include:

- Private guest rooms that comfortably accommodate a patient and one family member, friend, or caregiver
- A great room and a large, fully equipped kitchen
- Rest areas and living rooms for those who need rest after treatment
- Laundry facilities
- A cancer resource library, computer and media room, and recreation and fitness room

And it will all be free of charge to adults receiving cancer treatments in the Twin Cities.

"This will truly be a wonderful place for our patients to rest, heal, and rejuvenate" says John Kersey, M.D., director of the University of Minnesota Cancer Center. "Its location and design alone will reduce the inconvenience and emotional strain many feel during their treatment period. And the fact that it's free to qualified patients will lift an economic burden as well."

Right now, the Twin Cities Hope Lodge exists only on blueprints. The site — at 2500 University Avenue — has been cleared for construction. We're now looking for the last \$500,000 to complete this multimillion-dollar project. With your help, the Twin Cities Hope Lodge will be ready before the end of 2007.

To make a gift of any size, please contact Cathy Spicola at the University of Minnesota Cancer Center. You can reach her at 612-625-5192 or at c.spicola@mmf.umn.edu. You can also make a gift online at www.cancer.umn.edu/hopelodgegiving.



PHOTO: AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

At the Hope Lodge, cancer patients will be able to invite a friend, family member, or caregiver to stay with them while they rest and heal.



PHOTO: AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

The residence-style facility will include a large kitchen and several public areas to encourage new friendships and camaraderie.



The Twin Cities Hope Lodge will be located at 2500 University Avenue, just a few blocks from the University of Minnesota's renowned cancer clinics.

Creative ways to give

You don't have to be wealthy to contribute to health-related research at the University of Minnesota. Just ask these donors. Instead of digging into their pockets, they've invested their time and energy in efforts that bring people together to support the cause.

Sticking it to cancer

What started eight years ago as a benefit for one family has blossomed into a full-fledged hockey tournament that raises thousands of dollars a year for breast cancer research.

It all began when a so-called "hockey mom" in the Circle Pines Centennial Hockey Association got breast cancer, explains Jackie Olson, who now organizes the fund-raiser. "The family didn't have enough money to pay the bills, so Sue Olson, another mother in the association, and her family started this tournament," Olson says.

Less than a decade later, the Stick It to Cancer hockey tournament for girls and women is consistently attracting about 70 teams (that's about 1,000 participants) and raising \$35,000 each year. This year's event, held April 21–23 at the Blaine Sports Arena, raised \$37,000 for breast cancer research at the University of Minnesota Cancer Center.

Winners don't get trophies or medals, however. "That's more money we can donate," Olson says. The tournament also depends on volunteers and sponsorships to maximize proceeds, she says.

This is the first year the tournament has benefited the University of Minnesota Cancer Center's work. "We just wanted the money to stay local and help out anybody we could," Olson says.

Making strides in cystic fibrosis

As a child, Kate Gustafson loved playing outside with family friends Lindsay and Chelsea Votel. They'd play "house" and jump on the trampoline until it was time for Chelsea, who has cystic fibrosis, to come inside to do her treatments.

Kate and Lindsay would sit with Chelsea while she took her medications and strapped on a chest-thumping vest to loosen the mucus in her lungs. "We did everything we could to make her feel normal," Kate says.

Chelsea is heading to college this fall and living a normal life, largely because of her doctor, Warren Warwick, M.D., founder of the Minnesota Cystic Fibrosis Center and a world leader in CF research and treatments.

So when Gustafson, who just finished her junior year at the University, decided to organize a 5K race on campus, it was easy to decide where to send the proceeds.

"Dr. Warwick is number one in the nation for extending life expectancy for those with cystic fibrosis," she says. "He's the one who is taking care of Chelsea."

More than 400 people joined this year's 5K Run for Research, held March 25 on the University's Minneapolis campus. The event raised about \$7,500 for Warwick's work.

A cyclist with real heart

Bill Matson is a hard-charging investment CEO and portfolio manager from New Hampshire who's always on the go. But when heart troubles slowed him down last year, it was a Minnesota-made Medtronic aortic valve replacement that got him back on his feet.

Now, a year after surgery, Matson is giving back to the institution and the researchers who put the pep back in his step.

In January Matson started a cross-country bike ride to raise money for several causes, including the University of Minnesota Medical School. It was here that researcher Dick Bianco and his Experimental Surgical Services lab conducted the critical research and testing necessary to make sure that artificial valves are safe prior to human use.

Since he hit the road, Matson has logged nearly 3,000 miles on a path that has taken him from San Francisco south to San Diego, then east to Florida and Georgia. Now he's heading to the Midwest with plans to reach Minneapolis by June 16—the one-year anniversary of his valve surgery.

Why the big trip? "I see this as a great opportunity to raise money for truly deserving causes," says Matson, "and I wouldn't mind losing a few pounds while I'm at it."



Bill Matson is biking, including heart valve surgery. He and his wife are freelance writers, and she writes in her blog, and and visu





across the country to raise money for several causes, e research at the University of Minnesota. Pictured with iter Stephanie Barnes (left), who is chronicling the trip al artist Sarah Lavallee (right).

Cookbook for a cause

When Patricia Wilkinson died just five and a half weeks after being diagnosed with gastro-intestinal cancer, her family was devastated. Her daughter Kate felt she had to do something to stop this aggressive form of cancer.

Considering her mother’s love of cooking, Kate Wilkinson started collecting recipes for a cookbook she’d sell to help raise money for gastrointestinal cancer research. “Mom taught my four sisters and me to always use the

good china, use the good linens, make the best food — in essence, to make an event out of the ordinary,” she says.

The cookbook, *Use the Good China*, contains more than 300 recipes that have been tested and retested by Pat’s friends, family, and coworkers. But most important, says Kate, it’s a tribute to her mother’s life. “She showed all of us what courage, dignity, elegance, and

grace really are, even facing her own death,” she says. “Although she was confined to bed, she held numerous parties while she was sick, directing us, once again, to use the good china.”

Wilkinson is donating net proceeds from the \$15 cookbook to gastrointestinal cancer research at the University of Minnesota Cancer Center. So far more than 500 copies have sold. For information on how you can purchase the cookbook, please call Kate Wilkinson at 651-436-4110.



JUNE

19 MONDAY 11 a.m.
Golf Classic “fore”
Diabetes Research*
Town & Country Club,
St. Paul
Support breakthrough diabetes research at this annual golf outing hosted by the Diabetes Institute for Immunology and Transplantation.
① Contact Colleen Rourke at 612-625-6515 or c.rourke@mmf.umn.edu

19 MONDAY noon
Karen’s Hope Ataxia Benefit*
Oak Marsh Golf Course and Prom Center, Oakdale
Support research for the debilitating neurological disease known as ataxia. The day includes a golf tournament, silent auction, and charity dinner. Hosted by the Bob Allison Ataxia Research Center.
① Contact Heather Shetka at 612-624-4444 or h.shetka@mmf.umn.edu or visit www.karens-hope.org.

26 MONDAY 11:30 a.m.
Golf for the Cure*
Ridges at Sand Creek, Jordan
Hosted by the Diabetes Institute for Immunology and Transplantation.
① Contact Sue Clark at 612-626-0619 or s.clark@mmf.umn.edu.

JULY

24 MONDAY 6 p.m.
Rein in Sarcoma
Como Park Conservatory, St. Paul
Help raise money for sarcoma education and research at the University of Minnesota Cancer Center while enjoying unlimited rides on Cafesjian’s Carousel and an evening of music and silent auctions at the Como Park Conservatory.
① Visit www.reininsarcoma.org.

28 – 29 FRIDAY & SATURDAY
Lightning Run*
From St. Paul Harley-Davidson to the Holman Field Airport
This seventh annual motorcycle rally is hosted by St. Paul Harley-Davidson/Buell in support of the Diabetes Institute for Immunology and Transplantation.
① Visit www.lightningrun.com, or contact Heather Shetka at 612-624-4444 or h.shetka@mmf.umn.edu.

AUGUST

14 MONDAY noon
Minnesota Medical Foundation Golf Classic*
Midland Hills Country Club, St. Paul
Mark your calendars for this 16th annual event, which has raised more than \$645,000 for medical education, research, and service at the University of Minnesota.
① Contact Sue Clark at 612-626-0619 or s.clark@mmf.umn.edu.

22 TUESDAY 10 a.m.
Bob Allison Ataxia Golf Classic*
Owatonna Country Club, Owatonna
Join us for a day of golf topped off with dinner and a silent auction. Hosted by the Bob Allison Ataxia Research Center in support of ataxia research at the University of Minnesota.
① Contact Heather Shetka at 612-624-4444 or h.shetka@mmf.umn.edu.

SEPTEMBER

9 SATURDAY 8 a.m.
Pedal for Parkinson’s
Afton-Lakeland Bike Trail, Afton
Take part in this 10-mile bike ride or in-line skate to raise money for Parkinson’s disease research while enjoying the fall colors along the trail.
① Contact Shannon Birge Laudon at 612-626-3186 or s.birge@mmf.umn.edu.

OCTOBER

23 MONDAY 6 p.m.
Minnesota Medical Foundation Annual Dinner*
This event honors those who support health-related research, education, and service at the University of Minnesota. By invitation only.
① Contact Elizabeth Patty at 612-625-6136 or e.patty@mmf.umn.edu.

* Sponsored by the Minnesota Medical Foundation

go to:
www.mmf.umn.edu

For event descriptions, updates, links, and contact information.

A special thanks

We'd like to extend an extra thank-you to the following individuals and organizations who made commitments of \$100,000 or more between February and May 2006 to health-related education, research, and service at the University of Minnesota.

AGA Medical Corporation, Golden Valley, Minnesota, donated \$2 million to establish the Amplatz Chair in Radiology. This endowed position recognizes and honors the achievements of Dr. Kurt Amplatz, a pioneer in the field of interventional radiology and pediatric cardiology and a retired professor of radiology at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Amplatz cofounded AGA Medical Corporation in 1995. The company makes occlusion devices and accessories for the minimally invasive treatment of cardiovascular defects and peripheral vascular disease. (See article, page 1.)

Dr. Harry F. and Grace E. Burich of Rochester, Minnesota, have endowed a scholarship with \$100,000 in gifts. Dr. Burich, a surgeon and member of the Medical School Class of 1947, cofounded and practiced with the Olmsted Medical-Surgical Group until his retirement in 1983.

Benjamin B. and Vivian C. Calmenson of Mendota Heights, Minnesota, are continuing their generous support of the Robert L. Calmenson Pediatric Cardiology Endowed Research Fund with a \$100,000 estate gift. The Calmensons established this fund in 1998 in honor of their son and the excellent medical care he received at the University.

Fairview Health Services, Minneapolis, dedicated an additional \$500,000 to the Fairview Medical School Fund in support of the Medical School's academic leadership programs. Since 2001 Fairview has contributed a total of nearly \$8 million to this fund in support of the Medical School's research and education initiatives.

Jayne and Al Hilde Jr. of Jackson, Wyoming, pledged \$100,000 in support of the Center for Prostate Cancer.

Hubbard Broadcasting Company, St. Paul, made gifts totaling \$325,000 in support of the B. J. Kennedy Chair in Clinical Medical Oncology and the Zelickson Family Endowment in Dermatology. To date, Hubbard Broadcasting Company, the Hubbard Broadcasting Foundation, Stan and Karen Hubbard, KSTP-TV, and the KSTP radio stations have made over \$2 million in gifts and commitments to advance health-related research and education at the University of Minnesota.

Dusty and George A. Mairs of Mendota Heights, Minnesota, made contributions totaling \$500,000 to the Mairs Family Chair, which benefits the Bone and Soft Tumor Center in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. The Mairses' original \$1 million gift funded the appointment of Dr. Edward Cheng as chairholder.

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank, Inc., Minneapolis, gave \$212,389 to the Department of Ophthalmology's pediatric ophthalmology program and its teaching and research development fund. For more than 46 years, the Minnesota Lions have supported the University of Minnesota and its efforts to treat and prevent blindness.

The Carl and Eloise Pohlad Family Foundation of Minneapolis made a \$500,000 pledge to advance research on neurodegenerative diseases through the Bob Allison Ataxia Research Center (BAARC). Bob Allison, a former Minnesota Twins left-fielder, died of complications of ataxia in 1995. Carl Pohlad, owner of the Minnesota Twins, made the gift announcement at the 2006 BAARC Diamond Awards event.

Col. J. N. Pritzker (retired) of Chicago is supporting the Chair in Sexual Health in the Medical School's Program in Human Sexuality with a \$100,000 contribution.

Dr. Louise A. Town of Bloomington, Minnesota, made a \$400,000 estate gift to augment her outright gift to establish the Simo-Town Endowed Scholarship with her classmate and close personal friend, Dr. Kathleen Simo. Dr. Town, a member of the Medical School Class of 1966, practiced neurology through the Minneapolis Clinic of Neurology until her retirement in 1993.

The estate of Syvilla M. Turbis, Faribault, Minnesota, has given \$1,779,232 to date in support of the Diabetes Institute for Immunology and Transplantation and the Director's Research Fund of the Cancer Center.

The estate of Gladys Wilcox, St. Paul, has given \$216,753 to support cystic fibrosis research at the University of Minnesota. Ms. Wilcox's charitable giving was motivated by a niece with this disease.

Welcome new members!

Because of their generous support, the following donors were named to the University of Minnesota Presidents Club giving societies between February and May 2006. Their gifts have been designated (all or in part) to the Medical School, School of Public Health, Cancer Center, or other areas served by the Minnesota Medical Foundation.

BUILDERS SOCIETY
(\$1 million or more)

Rodney L. and Judith L. Cooperman

REGENTS SOCIETY
(\$500,000 to \$1 million)

Alice M. O'Brien Foundation

TRUSTEES SOCIETY
(\$100,000 to \$500,000)

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Col. J. N. Pritzker (retired)
*Sarah Bernadine Riske
St. Paul Harley-Davidson/Buell
Jane A. Starr
*Gladys M. Wilcox
Wright Medical Technologies, Inc.

CHANCELLORS SOCIETY
(\$50,000 to \$100,000)

Mark and Debra Allison
Biomet Orthopaedics Inc.
*Dr. Marjorie Hartig, '39
Glenda Taylor and Richard Huston, D.V.M.
Dr. Lee A. and Jennifer Kitzenberg
Dr. Jacques L. and *Rose E. Wachtel

FOUNDERS SOCIETY
(\$25,000 to \$50,000)

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*Charlotte K. and *Monroe J. Shine
Sisters of Mercy, Omaha Region
Lee D. and *Donna L. Stauffer
Dr. Brian D. Zelickson and Mary McCarthy

HERITAGE SOCIETY
(Future Gifts)

Benjamin B. and Vivian C. Calmenson
Etta Fay and *Dr. Milton Orkin
Dr. Louise A. Town, '66

*Deceased

Get on your bikes and ride!

Lightning Run diabetes benefit set for July 28 – 29

Over the past six summers, Minnesota motorcycle riders have taken to the streets of the Twin Cities to raise money for diabetes research. It's called the Lightning Run, and if you've never witnessed this event, this is the year to check it out.

The seventh annual Lightning Run will kick off on Friday, July 28 with a party at St. Paul's Summit Brewery. The motorcycle madness will continue Saturday, July 29 with runs in the morning followed by an afternoon parade and a post-ride party at Holman Field Airport in St. Paul. As in the past, the event is hosted by St. Paul Harley-Davidson/Buell.

New this year is a special performance by Trent Willmon, a rising star in country music. Trent's

performance is being donated by Twin Cities country radio station K102. Hubbard Broadcasting's family of TV and radio stations are also generously providing media support for the two-day extravaganza.

Proceeds from the Lightning Run directly support world-class research at the University of

Minnesota's Diabetes Institute for Immunology and Transplantation (DIIT).

Last year the event attracted more than 2,500 supporters and raised more than

\$240,000 for the cause.

Now there's even more reason to support the Diabetes Institute at the University of Minnesota. Earlier this year, DIIT researchers announced the results of a breakthrough study that shows they were actually

able to reverse diabetes in monkeys by transplanting insulin-producing cells (called islets) from pigs. This could be a turning point in diabetes research that may eventually provide an endless supply of islet cells for transplantation. But there's much more to be done to bring this research to human clinical trials, and your support is critical.

To learn more about how you can participate in Lightning Run — as a participant, sponsor, or volunteer — visit www.lightningrun.com or contact Heather Shetka at 612-624-4444 or h.shetka@mmf.umn.edu.

To learn more about the Diabetes Institute for Immunology and Transplantation — or to make a donation to further research in this area — contact Joel Bergstrom at 612-624-0450 or j.bergstrom@mmf.umn.edu.



PHOTO: FOTOWERKS STUDIOS

Last summer about 2,500 bikers, volunteers, and supporters came together to raise more than \$240,000 for diabetes research at the University of Minnesota. To learn more, go to www.lightningrun.com.

MINNESOTA MEDICAL FOUNDATION
at the University of Minnesota

The Minnesota Medical Foundation is a nonprofit organization that raises funds for health-related research, education, and service at the University of Minnesota.

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School of Public Health

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International Hearing Foundation
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technologies. But others — such as catheters, guide wires, renal dilators, and gooseneck snares — are still being used in hospitals around the world. Some of his inventions have even spawned other start-up device companies in Minnesota, including businesses formerly known as AngioMedics, SciMed Life Systems, and Microvena.

Late in his career, Amplatz turned his attention to congenital heart defects. It was in a small rented space on University Avenue that he and his son, Curtis, developed the first device designed to close a hole in the wall between the upper chambers of the heart. It eventually became known as the Amplatzer® septal occluder, his most famous invention. It was also the device that launched AGA Medical. By 1999 it was widely adopted in Europe; that same year, Amplatz retired from his faculty position at the University of Minnesota. By 2002 the device had FDA approval for use in the United States.

The proceeds made Amplatz a wealthy man, but his abiding interest in experimentation kept his sights in the workshop and in the laboratory. Even today he's still inventing, with six new medical devices in the works in three local labs — one of them at the University.

Ever humble, he's never forgotten his roots. "I come from the U," he says with an engaging grin. "I've been there for 45 years. All of my accomplishments are a result of the U."

That's the main reason Amplatz gives for AGA Medical's \$2 million gift to the Medical School's Department of Radiology this spring. The money will establish the permanently endowed Amplatz Chair in Radiology, which will be used to attract and retain outstanding faculty in the field of radiology and to encourage research fellows and staff who are training in interventional radiology.

"By establishing this chair, AGA Medical is not only honoring a world-class physician, but also elevating the Medical School and the entire University community," says Deborah Powell, M.D., dean of the Medical School. "The faculty who hold endowed chairs attract other

**CLOSING HOLES,
MENDING HEARTS**

Kurt Amplatz's most famous invention, the Amplatzer® septal occluder, is a miracle for those born with a hole between the heart's upper chambers. This tiny yet complex device, made from braided wire and patches of polyester fabric, is inserted into the heart through a leg catheter. Once in place, it expands into two bulbs which then collapse into flat disks on either side of the hole. Over time, blood clots form over the fabric to close the hole. The result: no surgery, no chest scar, and a short recovery — often just a few days.



passionate scholars. They ignite their students' curiosity. Their groundbreaking discoveries turn the world's attention to Minnesota, bring in major research grants, and create jobs in the University and the private sector."

If Kurt Amplatz's story is any indication, it could provide the start for another pioneering mind at the University of Minnesota. Amplatz himself fondly remembers the \$1,000 grant he received from the Minnesota Medical Foundation early in his career. Today he sees the Amplatz Chair as a way to give back to the university that provided seed money for his early experiments and the faculty position that allowed him to pursue his inventive ideas.

"It makes me feel good," he says of both the chair and his work. "And it helps people."

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